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TAGS: [AF](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [UNGA](#)

SUBJECT: BRIEFING ON UNAMA'S PROPOSED BUDGET - SPECIAL
ALLOWANCE AT RISK

REF: A. USUN 000937
[1](#)B. USUN 000697
[1](#)C. USUN 000585
[1](#)D. USUN 000572
[1](#)E. USUN 000375
[1](#)F. USUN 000362

Classified By: Ambassador Alejandro Wolff for reasons 1.4 (b) and (D)

[1](#)1. (S) In a briefing on October 9th to Fifth Committee experts of the Friends of Afghanistan on the soon-to-be-issued proposed 2009 budget of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), Scott Smith of DPKO confirmed many of the facts and figures he conveyed in a briefing on July 30th (Reftel B). Following discussion of the major components of the proposed budget (see paragraph 3 below), Smith highlighted the positive impact the Special Afghanistan Allowance (SAA) given to UN staff serving at UNAMA (\$1,620/month) has had on recruiting and retaining staff and underlined the importance of the Fifth Committee continuing the SAA in 2009 particularly considering that the Secretary-General will be requesting 516 new civilian posts in the proposed budget. Note: In a meeting on October 13th (Reftel A), SRSG Eide lamented the fact that the UN's cumbersome hiring system significantly diminished UNAMA's ability to achieve its expanded mandate. Ambassador Khalilzad assured Eide that the US would work to ensure the SAA remained in place. End Note.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Fifth Committee experts, including from Australia, Canada, and the UK, underlined the linkage between the Fifth Committee's upcoming consideration of the US proposal on streamlining of contracts and harmonization of conditions of service, i.e., benefits and allowances, for staff in the field and the Committee's consideration of the proposed UNAMA budget which includes funding for continuing the SAA in [1](#)2009. We are concerned that should the Fifth Committee fail to adopt an acceptable harmonization proposal, Member States may not be prepared to support continuation of the SAA because of the special treatment accorded to the staff of two missions (UNAMA and UNAMI (Iraq)). As has been recognized, agreement on an overall harmonization package applying to all field personnel should obviate the need for such special allowances. UNAMA and UNAMI personnel would continue to receive hazard pay (\$1,300/month).

[1](#)3. (U) Proposed Budget for 2009 - Facts and Figures:

2009 proposed budget - \$170 million - includes \$18 million for projected over-expenditures in 2008.
2008 budget - \$84 million.

2009 proposed budget includes -
\$1.2 million - military and police components
\$76.5 million - civilian staff - includes 516 additional posts (142 international posts, 358 national posts, 16 UN Volunteer posts) for an overall total of 2,102.
\$82.6 million - operational costs - includes additional costs for air assets, 135 new armored vehicles, and one-time costs

for construction of new provincial offices.
Wolff